

Centre for English
Traditional Heritage

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The Newsletter of the Centre for English Traditional Heritage

No. 2

2011

2011 has been an eventful year for the Centre. After lengthy planning and preparation, the CETH website, launched in 2009 (www.centre-for-english-traditional-heritage.org), outlines the aims and scope of the Centre and its ongoing Survey of English Tradition (SET), and the resources available to users. It summarises the research projects currently under way, and gives details of how to become a Correspondent or Local Representative for the Survey. Also included is information on the Centre's publications, and an open invitation to all those interested in offering assistance to the Centre, which relies entirely on volunteers for its day-to-day operation. There has been an enthusiastic response to the website, which is encouraging at this early stage of the project. Thanks are due to Janet Alton and Steve Dumbleton for their work in developing and creating the site, and to Paul and Simon Smith for the donation and registration of the domain name. We are also grateful to Peter Millington for advice on making the site more interactive.

The inaugural issue of the ejournal *Tradition Today* was posted on the website in April. It contains a variety of articles on a wide range of topics, including contemporary legend, wassailing, Thomas Hardy's ghosts, traditions in exile, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and traditional drama. There is also a Notes and Queries section, and reviews of recent publications. *Tradition Today* is an occasional journal, which invites papers on the full range of language and tradition, together with shorter notes, queries, and reports on current research in these fields. Articles are refereed by members of the editorial board and/or external readers, and contributions from students and recent entrants to these subject areas are especially welcome, not least to encourage younger scholars to develop their interest in these fields, particularly those working on aspects of cultural tradition in England. *Tradition Today* provides a forum for the promotion and encouragement of original research, both internationally and within the British Isles, across the wide fields of tangible and intangible heritage. The ejournal acts inter alia as a focus for the redevelopment of tradition studies in England, where the discipline, variously designated folklore, folklife, ethnology, cultural tradition, etc., has not enjoyed a sustained presence in the academy, nor the status and support accorded to it in most other cultures. In particular, the Centre and the ejournal emphasise the importance of language in the transmission, interpretation, and social and cultural impact of tradition.

Submissions to *Tradition Today* should be sent as an email attachment to: info@centre-for-english-traditional-heritage.org and should follow the stylesheet on pp. 70-71 of the first issue of the ejournal.

Work has continued on the preparation of a computer-held inventory of publications in the Centre's library. The library currently comprises some 14,000 books, augmented by journals, national and regional magazines, and other publications. The principal focus is on English language and tradition, with additional material on these subjects in North America. Anthropology, sociology, literature, history, topography, and religion are also well represented, along with a wide range of general reference works. To date, the linguistic book titles have been listed, and approximately a third of titles on tradition studies, anthropology, and sociology have been added to the inventory.

The two principal research and publication projects in which the Centre is involved have made good progress during the past twelve months. The first of these, *A Database of Traditional Drama in Newfoundland: Text, Context and*

Performance, is now in the final stage of editing and formatting, before being made available online via the Digital Archive Initiative of the Queen Elizabeth II Library at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. The project, which has occupied the editors for many years, is the preparation for publication of the Nigel Kneale collection of London Children's Traditional Games, entitled *Everybody Gather Round*. Editing of the preliminary draft is now almost completed, and it is hoped that the editing of the final manuscript will begin in 2012. The preliminary identification of the generalised references to published parallels of the games, rhymes, and other traditional material has been a challenging and time-consuming task, but is at last nearing completion.

Visitors to the Centre have included Dr Robert Smith of Southern Cross University, New South Wales, Australia, Professor Paul Smith of the Memorial University of Newfoundland, and Dr Barbara Loester of the University of Winchester.

The Baffled Wise Man in the Barrow: Jests, Jibes, Nicknames

A wellknown story associated with the inland Dorset village of Shapwick has it that, perplexed and aghast at the sight of a totally unfamiliar creature, in fact a crab that has fallen from a fisherman's basket, a group of local inhabitants summon an ancient sage to identify the alleged freak of nature. Too infirm to walk, the old man is brought along in a wheelbarrow and, after much deliberation, proclaims: "'Tis a land-monster! Wheel me off! Or we're all dead men." At this point, the fisherman who has lost the crab turns up and having retrieved it, is not slow to chaff the people of Shapwick for their fears (Briggs, 1991, Aii, p. 262). Indeed, according to a slightly different version narrated by Udall for whom the creature was a lobster or, less feasibly, a tortoise, it became a proverb in the neighbourhood to call any uncommon or inexplicable object "a Shapwick monster" (Udall, 1922, pp. 293-94).

Here now is the climax of the story in a Somerset dialect version narrated by John Read, who follows the usual pattern in having the "old-ancient man" transported in a wheelbarrow to have a look at "thik remarkable inseck" and pass judgement. As elsewhere, Read's mouthpiece is a fictitious Farmer Wangle: "When the wold man eyed en he opened his eyes wide, let vall his pipe, and hollied: 'Here, wheel I off, my sonnies, wheel I off.' These words, we are told, led to the villagers being given the nickname "Shapwick Wheel-offs".

As Read points out, there used to be a tale much of the same nature about the men of the Somerset village of Sparkford, some of whom one day stumbled across a hedgehog and, not knowing what it was, summoned "a know-all kind of a man" called Jack Ketch to pronounce upon it. "He eyed thik inseck; bended down and turned en over with his stick; poked en in the ribs; there, I couldn't tell 'ee what he didden do to en: but he dalled if he could even so much as make out head or tail to en, to start wi'! Well there – he said. Then he took off his hat and looked inside... Well there – well – I should zay 'tis a – well, a – Dazz it all, 'tis zummet!' he bu'st out, and went back to his work." Read alias Wangle concludes: "Mind, 'twur a regular game in the wold days to bait a Sparkford man wi' thik tale. ' 'Tis zummet!' Ha, ha, and nobody could do it better than a man from Camel – that's the next village!"

Although in this Sparkford account the wise man appears to be reasonably young and fit, and hence in no need of a wheelbarrow, there is clearly a connection with the Shapwick versions already discussed, but also with a Lancashire dialect version, the oldest known to me, by Tim Bobbin, the "father" of Lancashire dialect literature, who published it in 1750. In it, a tailor, "of Cromwell's time" is busy pulling turnips in his allotment, when he comes across a hedgehog in the headland strip, scrutinises it for a long time, but can make nothing of it, so covers it with his waistcoat, and tells his neighbours he thinks in his guts he has found a creature God never properly finished, "for it has nother head nor tele; Hont nor Hough [hock, leg]; midst not eend!" Loath to believe this, half a dozen of them decide to go and look if they can make sense of it, but all of them are baffled, for none has seen the like before. Then they hold counsel, and the end of it all is that they fetch a lame, shrewd old fellow, an elder, who knows about everything, for they look on him as the village luminary, *fuller o Leet thin a Glow-worm's A..se*. On being told about these matters he strokes his beard, sighs, and orders the wheelbarrow with the brand-new wheel to be fetched. This is done, and they trundle him along to the hedgehog in a trice. He glares at it for a good while, pulls his beard, and turns it [scil. the hedgehog or urchin] over with his crutch. "'Wheel me about again, to the other side,' says he, 'for it sturs, an be that [and judging by that] it shou'd be whick [alive]. Then he dons his Spectacles, steart at 't agen, on Soughing [and sighing] sed: 'Breether [brothers], its summat: Boh [but] Feather Adam nother did nor cou'd Kersun [christen] it – Wheel me Whoam ogen.'" (Collier, 1806, pp. xi-xii; cf. Ogden and Wright, 1979, pp. 33-36).

Clearly the West Country versions share many features with the older one from Lancashire. Two stand out. One is the wheelbarrow motif, conspicuous for its oddity, and the other is the Sparkford punchline " 'Tis zummet!", which echoes the Lancashire sage's rather fuller pronouncement that begins, "Breether, its summot." It is memorable items such as these that played an important part in inter-village rivalry. Thus, Read tells us, people from Camel would bait their neighbours from Sparkford with the words " 'Tis zummet," while the inhabitants of Shapwick, as we have already seen, were taunted with "Shapwick Wheel-offs" (Read, 1914, pp. 97-98; Hutchings, 1956, pp. 79-80; Hutchings, 1968, pp.214-215):

"Wheel I off, wheel I roun',
Wheel I away vrom Shapwick Down!" (Read, 1923, p. 28.)

What was meant by outsiders as an insult could, however, become for insiders a badge of pride, as we see from the fact that at Shapwick the cap of the local cricket team still bears the sign of the crab (Palmer, 1973, p. 35), and that in the village there is, or was, a barn with a weather-vane showing a man pushing another man in a wheelbarrow, with a crab on the ground in front (Read, 1914, pp. 97-98). This duality can be further illustrated from a related story attached to Aldbourne in Wiltshire where the creature the locals could allegedly not identify was a dabchick, whence the nickname Aldbourne Dabchicks. According to Kathleen Wiltshire, an old man called Thomas Hawkins, whom she knew when she was a very small girl, told her he was an "Aldbourne dabchick", a soubriquet belonging exclusively to true-born Aldbourne people. This, then, was a matter of pride. On the other hand, it was not safe, especially during Feast Week, for outsiders to bandy the name about, for fear of finding themselves in the village pond. People from the neighbouring village of Ramsbury were great offenders in this respect, and were said on occasion to have tied a dead dabchick to the back of the Aldbourne carrier's cart.

Kathleen Wiltshire has yet more to tell us. In the belfry of Aldbourne church there is a small Corr bell with a little water bird engraved inside it. Since the last Corr bell was cast in 1757, it would seem that the dabchick has been the symbol of Aldbourne since then at least (Wiltshire, 1975, p. 132). Our parallel Lancashire tradition, in which a hedgehog rather than a dabchick is the source of puzzlement, was likewise already current in the mid eighteenth century. At some point perhaps further evidence will emerge, enabling us to get a fuller view of this complex bundle of traditions.

For the moment we do have another avenue of approach. To Bishop's Canning in Wiltshire belongs a related story in which a wiseacre is brought in a wheelbarrow to pronounce on a ticking watch that has been found. He proclaims it to be a dangerous *ticktoad* that must be smashed to pieces. Another version is associated with Darlaston in Staffordshire, where a sage called Daddy is wheeled in to identify a similar timepiece, against which he advises the locals to arm themselves with sticks and stones, for it is a *cleeking toad* (clicking toad). Charles Henry Poole, who published the story in the 1870s on the basis of versions found in *Notes and Queries*, tells us an old manservant of his had heard the same tale about a "clicking toad" from Cornishmen some forty years before (Westwood and Simpson, 2005, pp. 782-83, 663). Whether or not this will ever re-emerge, its one-time presence in the West Country may be reasonably assumed from the word *clickmetoad*, recorded in south Lancashire, but also Devon. In south Lancashire it was, predictably perhaps, a jocular expression for a watch. In Devon, when recorded in 1892, its meaning had broadened, so that it now referred to any mechanically powered device (Wright, 1970 vi, Supplement, p. 67). The signs are, then, that, as so often, the word survives where the tale to which it belongs has faded from view. Perhaps, though, at some point this too will come to light again.

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J.B. Smith

LISTEN TO YOUR LANGUAGE

The Centre is gathering information on two emerging trends in the pronunciation of English in contemporary Britain. The first of these is the proliferation of spoken examples of the name of the letter H (*aitch*) being pronounced as *haitch*. At first sight the addition of the aspirate /h/ in initial position here might be seen simply as a hypercorrection adopted, for example, by speakers of regional varieties of English, perhaps prompted by dictionary entries on the letter, which typically read: H, aitch, the eighth letter of the English alphabet. As H is frequently dropped in many English dialects, speakers of those varieties may add /h/ to words beginning with a vowel, whether for emphasis or uncertainty about which words begin with an aspirate and which do not. While this might explain why speakers in these groups may add /h/ where it is not required, there is strong evidence that the practice has spread comparatively recently to speakers of more standard varieties of English. These include presenters and others on radio and television who consistently add /h/ initially in referring to the name of the letter. A typical example occurs in some recent advertisements for the HSBC Bank, and in the spelling out of words including the letter H in quiz shows and word games.

The second trend is the common tendency among presenters and others on radio and television to substitute a centralised or frontal vowel for the short /u/ sound in words such as *book*, *look*, etc. This developing phenomenon is being investigated at the Centre as part of a wider project whose working title is "What's Happening to /u/?" The shift from /u/ to a more centralised and/or lowered vowel (as in the first and second vowels of RP *above* respectively) is not a new development. See, for example, G. Nixon, " 'Fall-back' varieties", *Lore and Language*, vol. 3, No. 3, Part A (July, 1980), 17-24, and K. Payne, "The Cushy Mushys: some reflections on the 'Sophisticated Northern Accent' ", *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*, Part CXI, vol. XXII (2011), 17-20. However, the trend has accelerated markedly over the past two decades, and has been joined more recently by another shift in which /u/ is represented as a fronted and centralised vowel similar to that in French *tu* and German *grün*. Whether this shift is in any way influenced by some similar Scottish pronunciations of /u/, as repeatedly available in the advertising slogan "Good with food", used by a leading supermarket, on radio, television, and instore, is open to debate. Whatever is driving these two shifts, they both represent a significant move away from the established pronunciation of /u/ in RP and in other standard varieties of English. The question also remains as to whether these shifts reflect a flight from the use of the lower high back vowel [u] because of its association with varieties perceived as less prestigious. Whatever the reason, in some prestigious speech groups the vowel typical of the standard FOOT group is apparently moving towards that of the STRUT group or, more recently, towards the vowel of French *tu* and German *grün*. These speculations now need to be confirmed or contradicted by evidence from a largescale survey. As a starting point, we would be grateful to receive details of these shifts, as heard from as wide a selection of speakers as possible. Contributions should quote the example in its full spoken context, pointing out if the shift is of type A: FOOT > STRUT, or B: /u/ > *tu*, *grün* or C: other. It is important to identify the speaker, (programme) source, date heard, and any other relevant contextual information. Alternatively, examples could be recorded electronically, adding the same contextual information. All contributions should be sent to the address on page 8, and will be added to the information already on file to assist the development of this project.

Shewel and Breaking Shewel

The German noun *das Scheusal*, etymologically "something used for scaring, something to be scared of" (Kluge, 1989, p. 631), is often translated "monster". As the lexicographer Walther Mitzka has shown, in older and dialectal usage it can also mean "scarecrow", while in the language of hunters and farmers it can stand for something used by

them to scare off intrusive mammals. Thus as late as 1864 the zoologist Alfred Brehm wrote that elephants could be kept from cultivated fields by means of a very basic *Scheusal* or the flimsiest of fences.

What equivalents have we in English for the word *Scheusal* as here used? Despite Mitzka's contention that it is restricted to German (Mitzka, 1955, p. 62), there is in fact an English word that is not only cognate, but also conveys much the same idea. It is *shewel* alias *sewel*(l), an expression for "scarecrow" that survived in the dialects of Oxfordshire and Berkshire until the nineteenth century (Wright, 1970, v, p. 380) while in the language of hunting it signified a piece of paper or cloth suspended or set up to deter a deer from entering a particular place or from going in a particular direction. As an authority on these matters put it in 1535, a hunter would use such a device "to kepe the dere within the woode, therby to have the better cry with his howndes" (Simpson and Weiner, 1989, xv, p. 250). More than two hundred years later, in 1854, Anne Elizabeth Baker explained in her Northamptonshire glossary that a *sewell* was "a line of feathers fastened on twine and placed a foot or two from the ground in the open parts of a forest, to keep the deer within bounds". There will no doubt have been an expression *to break sewell*, easily understood in its literal sense. Certainly such an expression was used metaphorically in the vicinity of Rockingham Forest, when a person had forsaken an old habit. Baker illustrates this as follows: "A gentleman observing a friend taking a glass of wine who had been an habitual water-drinker for many years, exclaimed 'So you've broke sewell at last'." (Wright, 1970 v, p. 339)

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J.B. Smith

The BBC Voices Project: Large-scale Interest in a Most Important Subject

The British Broadcasting Corporation's *Voices* Project, an investigation into the speech of communities across the United Kingdom, which the Corporation undertook in 2004-5 and with data continuing to accumulate to 2007, was an indication of how seriously the Corporation takes the issue of dialect differences. The project spoke very eloquently in the advertised purposes of the Corporation, these being:

- Sustaining citizenship and civil society
- Promoting education and learning
- Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence
- Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities
- Bringing the UK to the world and the world to the UK
- Delivering to the public the benefit of emerging communications technologies and services

Voices shows the BBC seriously to be engaged in its public service role on all these fronts. In June 2011 a report was submitted to the BBC from the one or two major ongoing academic *Voices*-related projects, providing an overview of some activity in the scholarly arena to probe data which the Corporation gathered immediately for broadcasting purposes but with an appreciation of its likely worth beyond the short term.

Two major academic research projects stem from the BBC *Voices*, each aiming to interpret emerging data for as wide a public as possible: Their existence in itself helps to validate the "purposes" set out above. The two research projects are *Whose Voices?*, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and ending in 2011, and *Voices of the UK*, Leverhulme Trust-funded at the British Library until 2012. The second of these is led by Jonnie Robinson, who this year addressed the Yorkshire Dialect Society AGM on the British Library's dialect research. The report to the BBC

came from the former project, the Leeds-based *Whose Voices?*. Large-scale study of *Voices* outputs sees BBC promotion of education and learning in a very large measure, across the educational spectrum from the interested lay person to students of all ages. In shedding light on communication within and between communities, BBC *Voices* and its derived projects speak to a civic agenda that gives a voice to individuals and to their communities up to and including the country's constituent nations.

Whose Voices? has concentrated its efforts on the study of the content of the BBC *Voices* website (bbc.co.uk/voices) and of the vocabulary data input to the site by members of the public. There is focus especially, in Part 1 of the report, on debates about English and other languages in the national and international arenas, as exemplified in both *Voices* website construction and the discussions which it provoked. Beyond this, Parts 2 and 3 of the report rehearse something of the technological innovations required in a Humanities context in order fully to bring to life a complex dataset deriving from audience-participation broadcasting, and how the data might be used in teaching. (*Voices of the UK*, which is engaged in analysis of the sound recordings collected by *Voices* broadcast journalists, sees the British Library merging these recordings into its Sound Archive, taking web delivery of its holdings to new levels.)

It is instructive to note the distinct parallels between the BBC's purposes and the themes emerging from a pilot study conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) English Subject Panel, which is responsible for preparing for the university-sector Research Excellence Framework (the "REF") evaluation exercise that is due to take place in 2014. According to this study, good research should:

- feed the creative economy
- preserve cultural heritage
- extend the knowledge base
- enrich and promote regional communities and their cultural and learning industries

Coincidence of BBC purpose with *Voices* research makes it no surprise that the British Academy included the work of *Whose Voices?* as one of only ten case studies selected nationally for its publication *Past Present and Future: The Public Value of the Humanities and Social Sciences* (<http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/news.cfm/newsid/364>). This publication was launched in the House of Commons in June 2010, as part of the British Academy's ultimately successful case to HM Government for steady-state funding into 2015. The aim of the publication was to illustrate how humanities and social science scholarship "contributes to the cultural, social and economic health, wealth, and reputation of the UK". It is most appropriate that the national Academy representing our field of endeavour should recognise as valuable to its own case the initiative of the British Broadcasting Corporation in conceiving and executing the *Voices* Project. It should also be very encouraging to those of us with a special concern for the dialects of the country that our subject is taken so seriously at an official level.

Anyone who would like a copy of the *Whose Voices?* report to the BBC is most welcome to contact me at the School of English at Leeds University.

Clive Upton

STICKING ONE'S SPOON IN THE WALL

Of the innumerable synonyms for "to die", the one that concerns us in this note is *to stick one's spoon in the wall*", which Partridge in his *Dictionary of Slang* classes as colloquial and traces back to 1814, but is apparently at a loss to explain. The expression is also dialectal. Under *spoon*, Wright gives *to put one's spoon in the wall*, from Gloucestershire and south Worcestershire, and under the verb *to stick*, *to stick one's spoon in the wall* from Norfolk and southeast Worcestershire, while under *to give* we find the Lancashire *to give up one's spoon*, likewise meaning "to die".

Comparable expressions of similar import occur elsewhere. Dutch has *Hy heft de lepel neergelegd* ("He has put down his spoon"). Consider also German dialect expressions such as, from Mecklenburg, *De het den Läpel an de Wand stäken* ("He has stuck his spoon in the wall") and *De lickt den Läpel ok nich wedder* ("He won't be licking his spoon anymore"), from the Rhineland *Der hät de letzten Löffel geleckt* ("He's licked his last spoon"), and from Swabia *den Löffel wischen/aufstecken*, ("to wipe/stick in one's spoon").

In such sayings the spoon symbolises the vital process of eating. When this ceases and the spoon is wiped or put away for the last time, life itself ceases. At the same time we are reminded that, of the eating utensils, the spoon is the most basic and primeval, unlike the fork for instance, which came into use relatively recently. In large households, each member would possess his own spoon, which after use he would wipe and place on the wall.

Other expressions that equate dying with the cessation of eating are *to hand in one's dinner pail* and *to lay down one's knife and fork*.

J.B. Smith

ARE YOU CUTTING IT?

In the present economic downturn, cuts are very much in the news. Reports of cuts seem to be in every newspaper and make depressing reading. But if you take the time to scan other sections of the newspaper or magazine you may be surprised to discover a wealth of information on aspects of language and tradition tucked away unexpectedly — a welcome relief from the doom and gloom. And this is where you can do some useful cutting of your own, whether for your personal interest, and/or to help the Survey of English Tradition to gather information on current reports and examples of continuity and change in language and tradition in Britain and beyond. All you need is an attentive eye, a pair of scissors, and scrupulous care in documenting the publication, date, and page number of the item you consider both relevant and worth preserving.

Once a very popular practice, taking cuttings from newspapers and magazines has naturally declined dramatically as information has become increasingly available to all, especially since the advent of the internet. Even so, the pursuit of current information on specific topics by the careful and documented excerpting of material available in these published sources is a valuable exercise. It is vital to the monitoring of the present state and development of many aspects of our culture, including what is happening in our language and traditions at a time of momentous change. In addition to reports, articles, commentaries, surveys, reviews, letters, and many other printed items, not forgetting photos, drawings, cartoons etc., newspapers and magazines provide an ongoing record of innovations, sequential movements, and future trends in our multicultural society, including those specifically concerned with language and tradition. While individual cuttings from these sources may seem of little value, they assume a much more important role when added to a substantial number of others on the same topic. Gathered together, as they often used to be when pasted in themed scrapbooks, these individual cuttings not only provide factual information on the subject concerned, but also a variety of opinions which assist in their evaluation. While the national press, of course, covers some of the major stories, a great deal of valuable information on our subjects is hidden away in regional and local publications, including free papers dependent on advertising, which often carry articles on language, customs, beliefs, legends, music, dance, drama, arts, and crafts etc. in the geographical areas concerned.

While the availability of relevant items is dependent in part on the editorial policy of individual publications, which influences or dictates the topics acceptable to or favoured by the newspaper or magazine, these sources prove to be significant repositories of information which is of interest to researchers in aspects of language and tradition. It is true that the plethora of resources available on the internet can be drawn on immediately to provide information on specific topics in these fields, but extensive files of cuttings deposited in archives and searchable in an appropriate range of categories can play a valuable part in researching linguistic and cultural developments.

Recent contributions to the Centre's archives from correspondents and other members of the Survey team include cuttings on the full range of language and tradition. References to language focus especially on neologisms (including changes in the meaning of such "weasel words" as *accountability*, *diversity*, *iconic*, *journey*), on the proliferation of slang, and on the resilience and commercial exploitation of accents and dialects in advertising and in call centres. Childlore is well represented in reports about the decline in children's outdoor play, and the effects of health and safety legislation on traditional games. Calendar customs are very much in evidence, e.g. reports on their commercialisation, on suggestions to move May Day celebrations to October, and on such local events as the cheese rolling custom at Cooper's Hill, Gloucestershire, resurgent after health and safety concerns led to its being cancelled in 2010. Research indicated that around half of the population maintain superstitions about good and bad luck. Legends and reports of ghosts, "big cats", and other phenomena continue to be reported regularly, as do jokes (a useful antidote for those suffering from an unwelcome dose of bad news). Cuttings testify to the increasing popularity of traditional music (e.g. the successes of singers at the Brit and Grammy Awards) and traditional dance. Numerous

cuttings also illustrate widespread interest in material culture, from vernacular architecture to the maintenance and revival of traditional arts and crafts. All this information is readily available and easy to collect. Gathered together thematically, it helps to piece together a detailed picture of our changing language and traditions. Why not get out the scissors and do some cutting that will not only be really useful but will help the Survey to be as comprehensive as possible. Please send your cuttings to the address on page 8. We look forward to receiving them and adding them to the archives.

CREOLE PROVERBS FROM BELIZE

Not surprisingly, Belizean Creole proverbs can to us seem rather exotic. Take *Chikin merry, haak pik ahn bifoe daak*, which may be translated, "The chicken is merry in the morning, but the hawk seizes it before night falls." Another example: *Wen kakroach mek daans, ih noh invite foul*, alias, "When the cockroach organises a dance, it doesn't invite the fowl." There are, however, other items that seem a little more familiar. On the face of it, this might not appear to apply to the following, which refers to the hurricane season, lasting from June to November and feared by all: *June to soon; Julai stan by; Aagas luk out yu mos; September memba; Aktoaba aal oava*. In fact, this makes use of a wellknown framework, typified by an English saying about, of all things, when to cut thistles. It varies a good deal. Here is a Shropshire example: *Cut 'em in June, They'll come again soon. Cut 'em in July, They may die. Cut 'em in August, Die they must*.

Now try your hand at the following: *Oal faiyawud noh haad fi kech; If yu play wid popi, ih wahn lik yu mowt; Emti vesl mek di moas naiz; Pongkin noh byaa melan; Dam oh weh ih noh hav tong mek kow noh taak*. And finally: *Neva kaal haligeta big mowt til yu don kraas di riva*.

Sources: Verolyn Richards, *Creole Language Manual*, Belize, Peace Corps, 2000, pp. 110 and 92; G.L. Apperson, *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Proverbs*, Ware, Wordsworth, 1993, p. 626; Naomi Glock et al., *You Can Read and Write Kriol*, Belize City, Belize Kriol Project, 2002, p. 24.

J.B. Smith

SUPPORTING THE CENTRE

As the Centre operates entirely through voluntary help, we are grateful for contributions in support of our work. Donations, offers of assistance (clerical, administrative, promotional, etc.), and gifts of publications, recordings, photographs, and other material are very welcome at any time. The ongoing work of the Centre depends on the help and support of those who value their traditional heritage, and recognise the importance of monitoring its continuity, change, and development for the benefit of future generations

All contributions to the newsletter (short articles, reports on fieldwork, research etc., notes and queries) should be sent to: The Editor, trad. at the address below.

Articles for publication in the ejournal *Tradition Today*, contributions of material, correspondence, requests for collecting slips, forms, questionnaires (e.g. those for SET, SYD, SSU and for the survey of weather sayings and traditions) etc., and all other enquiries, should be sent to:

The Secretary
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